MODERN PLEAS FOR SCHISM AND Infidelity reviewed.

The Second Edition.

The First Part.

The double minded Man is unstable in all his Ways, James i. 8.

LONDON:

Printed, and Sold by *Henry Clements*, at the *Half moon*; and *Charles Rivington*, at the *Bible* and *Crown*, in St. *Paul's* Church-yard; *Robert Gosling*, at the *Mitre*, and *J. Hooke*, at the *Flower-de-Luce*, in *Fleet-street*; *J. King*, in *Westminster-hall*; *J. Walthoe*, at the *Golden Ball*, over-against the *Royal Exchange*. MDCCXVI.

MODERN PLEAS

FOR

SCEPTICISM

AND

Infidelity reviewed.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THAT there is no end of Controverſy, has been, and will be the Complaint of all that engage in it; but to infer that Truth and Falſhood are therefore undiſtinguiſhable, and the humane Intellect wholly loſt to all Perception of them, would be to make the Concluſion more fatal than its Premiſe. Our bleſſed Lord indeed has prophetically told us, it *muſt needs be that Offences will come*; but the ſubſequent *Wo* he denounces againſt thoſe by whom they do come, ſhows they flow not from the Defects of the Judgment, but Corruptions of our Will.

WHATEVER the wild Sceptciks of the Age offer to the contrary, moſt certainly Hereſy in Speculation is of the ſame Nature with Immorality in Practice, and we are under no more Neceſſity of bringing in *damnable Hereſies*, than being culpable of damnable Practices; 'tis not from the Weakneſs of the Underſtanding, but the wretched Perverſneſs of the Will, the World is ſo burthen'd with both. Let us therefore not

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add Blaſphemy to our Hereſy, and charge the voluntary ſtudy'd Fallacies of our own wicked Minds on him, who among other infinite Perfections, has declar'd himſelf the God of Truth.

AS there is an eternal Difference between Truth and Falſhood, ſo wou'd we be honeſt and ingenuous in the Uſe of thoſe Powers given us to judge of their Difference, Controverſy (at leaſt in the weighty and momentous Parts of it) would then ſoon have an End, in ſpight of the Maxim before us; and *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptiſm*, be the happy Language of Chriſtians.

I WOULD not here be thought to repreſent the great and important Truths of Chriſtianity, as light and ſuperficial Speculations, level to the Apprehenſions of every mean and illiterate Man. No! undoubtedly our holy Creed has its Sublimities, ſuch as will ſufficiently engage the greateſt Search of the moſt rais'd and ſagacious Capacities. But that which I would endeavour to eſtabliſh in this Undertaking is, *That the humane Intellect in general, is not wanting of an equal Capacity, to judge certainly of the Truth or Falſhood of Propoſitions that are laid before it*; and were the ſame Application of Mind undergone, the ſame Arts of Addreſs and Language us'd to inculcate the honeſt Truths of Religion on the Minds of Men, as there are to gloſs and ſet off Error, the Heterodoxies of our Faith would appear even to the moſt common and now undiſcerning Eye, as deform'd and odious as the Immoralities of our Practice.

ONLY *from our Pride come our Contentions.* Some Way muſt be found to make our ſelves Conſiderable; and ſo fatal is the Deſire we have of being eſteem'd ſo, that we bear down the natural and cool Reſolves of our Judgments, and rather than ſquare our Notions by the common and eaſy Standard of Truth, chooſe to raiſe the Trophies of our Reputation on the Spoils of our Creed.

TO trace the ſeveral Evils that naturally fall under this melancholy Debate, (in an Age of Atheiſm and Infidelity) would ſwell theſe Papers beyond the Bulk of their preſent Deſign. But that I may not ſeem to ſcuffle with the airy Phantoms of a fond Imagination, or perplex the Reader with only confus'd Generals, I hope it will not be thought improper to conſider the preſent Controverſy (as it has of late been manag'd) under the three following diſtinct Views.

Firſt, As it ſtrikes at the very Eſſence and Certainty of the Chriſtian Religion in general.

Secondly, As it has more immediately outrag'd ſome of the Prime and Fundamental Articles of our Faith.

And, *Laſtly,* As it is deſtructive to the Peace of the Church, and renders Unity among Chriſtians in general impracticable.

Firſt, As it ſtrikes at the very Eſſence and Certainty of the Chriſtian Religion in general.

IT is a melancholly Consideration, to find that Power which was given us by Almighty God to judge of the Difference betwen Truth and Falshood, given up in a Complement, and all the Certainty of our Faith, resolv'd into the wild and extravagant Conclusions of every bold Blasphemer, and ignorant Enthusiast: And that whenever they are pleas'd to call what is purely the Birth of their Pride, their Prejudice, or their Weakness, the Resolves of their Reason and Conscience, that therefore they shall be thought Unanswerable. Very certain I am, that *from the Beginning it was not so.* In the first and best Ages of Christianity, the unerring Spirit of God insists on such a Thing as Demonstration, the strong and irresistible *Demonstration of the Spirit*: That our holy Faith was not founded *on cunningly-devised Fables, but A SURE WORD OF PROPHECY, such as would make us wise unto Salvation*: And tho' some of the kind Gentlemen of these Times, are pleas'd (out of their abundant Reason and Temper) to give us a different Account of this Matter, he tells us, *If his Gospel was hid, it was hid to them that were lost, the God of this World having blinded their Minds.* He does not resolve all into Diffidence and Uncertainty. *

1 Cor. 2. 4. 2 Pet. 1. 16, 19. 2 Tim. 3. 15. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

'He does not tell them that Almighty God will 'never Condemn us for not being Orthodox, 'nor assert that the Erroneous are as much per-'swaded of the Truth of what they profess, as 'Men can be. † He does not tell them that

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* *Letter from a Layman in Communion*, &c. p. 9, 13.

† Mr. Steel's *Letter*, p. 11, 13. *with other Pamphlets against the Bill of* Schism.

we have a Natural and Original Right to the Means of Ignorance (for that which only confirms People in Obſtinacy and Error, cannot, I am ſure, be juſtly call'd the Means of Knowledge) nor think it any Abſurdity to aſſert ſuch a Thing as the infallible Judge of Truth and Error, even upon Earth; however it may appear in a late Lay Gentleman's Proteſtant Judgment, having engag'd himſelf, (tho' not Locally and Viſibly, as ſome have idly imagin'd) to be ſuch an one, (at leaſt directively) even *to the guiding us into all Truth.* In fine, he does not Complement the Outragers of his ſacred and eternal Truths, with the honeſty of their Intentions, impartiality of their Enquiries, *&c.* but with an Evidence and Energy, that always has, and will bear down the little Arts and Cavils of the moſt cunning Infidel; openly, and with Majeſty, aſſerts the Fulneſs and Perfection, the Clearneſs and Perſpicuity, the Authority and Force of thoſe great and everlaſting Manifeſtations made to us throughout the Goſpel; and concludes, if all theſe had not their proper and genuine Influence upon our Faith and Practice, it was not that we were void of ſufficient Capacity of Perception, but becauſe we are blinded by our Luſts and Paſſions.' So that *ſeeing we will not ſee, and hearing we will not hear nor underſtand* We are obſtinately bent againſt all Conviction, and loſt to all Senſe of the cleareſt Demonſtration, which can in Nature be offer'd.

Joh. 16. 13.

Tho' a great deal more of this kind might be produc'd to evince the Certainty of our Faith,

(as *built on the Foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, Chriſt himſelf being the Chief and Corner Stone*) is fix'd and infallibly ſure, and throughout the whole ſacred Volume tenaciouſly inculcated as ſuch; yet, what has been already offer'd, being abundantly ſufficient to ſatisfy any honeſt and ingenuous Mind, we will not needleſly burden theſe Papers with redundant Quotations, but proceed to examine what Senſe our Church, and ſome of the moſt conſiderable Divines of the Proteſtant Name (under which they whom we are at preſent engag'd againſt, ſeem ſo mighty fond to be rank'd) have deliver'd in this Matter, and whether the Certainty of the Proteſtant Faith is reſolv'd by them into that wild Rove of Imagination and Perverſneſs, which has of late been ſo warmly contended for.

" HOLY Scripture (ſays our Church) con-
" taineth all Things neceſſary to Salvation:
" * So that whatſoever is not read therein, nor
" may be prov'd thereby, is not to be requir'd
" of any Man, that it ſhould be believ'd as an
" Article of the Faith, or be thought requiſite
" or neceſſary to Salvation. In the Name of
" the holy Scripture we do underſtand thoſe
" Canonical Books of the old and new Teſta-
" ment, of whoſe Authority was never any
" Doubt in the Church.

" THE Rule of our Faith (ſaith Biſhop *Til-
" lotſon*) is the Scriptures, which are abundantly
" ſufficient, if Men are not wanting to them-
" ſelves,

* *Article the* VI.
† *Arch-Biſhop* Tillotſon's *Rule of Faith*, §. 5th, Part 1ſt.

" ſelves, to convey the Chriſtian Doctrine to
" all ſucceſſive Ages. " * The Reſolution of
" our Faith (ſaith Biſhop *Stillingfleet*) is; that we
" ought to believe nothing as an Article of
" Faith, but what God has revealed, and that
" the compleat Revelation of God's Will is re-
" tain'd in the Bible. " † Our Rule in theſe Ca-
" ſes (ſaith the late Arch-Biſhop of *York*) is, to
" the Law, and to the Teſtimonies, to the
" Publick, and undoubted Oracles of God, in
" the Old and New Teſtament. " ‡ *The learned Author of the Scriptures genuine Interpreter aſſerted*, has given us ſo fully the Senſe of all ſound Proteſtants in this Point, that I can't but tranſcribe him. " That the Written Word of God (ſaith
" he) is the only Rule of Faith, is acknowledg'd
" by all, who ſincerely own the Proteſtant
" Cauſe; and adds further, that it infallibly
" guides, and determines us *per modum objecti*,
" what we are to believe. This is one great
" Argument uſed by our Proteſtant Writers to
" ſhut out Popiſh Traditions from being a part
" of the Rule of Faith; becauſe the Scripture
" is a perfect, and ſufficient Rule of it ſelf, and
" muſt be ſo, or elſe it can be no Rule at all. "
As he goes on with a great deal more of this kind. And indeed a very little Theory would be equal to fill a Folio with Authorities of this ſort, were a Man fond of Collecting: The Senſe of our Proteſtant Divines ſo frequently occurring in this Point, that it can't be unknown to even the commoneſt Reader; and had not the Dinn

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* *Biſhop* Stillingfleet's *Idolatry of the Church of* Rome. p. 115, §. 10. † *Biſhop* Sharp's *Sermon on a ſtanding* Revelation. ‡ *Scriptures Genuine Interpreter. Part the ſecond*, Ch. 10. p. 223, & 232.

of some of our Modern, and overgrown Protestants, merely extorted what has been always offer'd, I should have thought it trifling, and impertinent, to have mention'd any thing of it on this Occasion. But since thus much was needful, I must begg to add one Authority more, which always has so exceedingly indear'd it self to me, that I am really fond of all Opportunities of mentioning him with Reverence; 'tis the late Pious and Learned Bishop *Beveridge*, who thus expresses himself; '* The first thing that by 'the Grace of God, I am resolv'd to do, in reference to my everlasting Estate, is, to see my 'Faith, that it be both rightly placed, and 'and firmly fix'd, that I may not be as a *Wave 'tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine, by the 'cunning Craftiness of those who lye in wait to De-'ceive*; but that I may be thoroughly settled in 'my Faith, and Judgment, concerning those 'things, the Knowledge of, and Assent unto 'which, are absolutely necessary to my future 'Happiness. Let therefore what Times soever 'come upon me, let what Temptations soever 'be thrown before me, I am resolv'd, by the 'Grace of God, stedfastly to believe as fol-'loweth.'

THE Sum of these Passages, I think I may venture to affirm (without any Comment) to be this, that the Dernier Resort of the Protestant Faith, (as laid before us by our Church) and these Excellent and Learned Men, is this; that the holy Scripture is an abundant, sufficient, compleat,

* *Private Thoughts on* Religion. p. 5.

compleat, undoubted, perfect, infallible, clear, authentic, fixt, and ſettled Rule, which ought entirely to Determine all Debates and Controverſies in Religion; and tho' any Man, nay an Angel from Heaven would attempt to oppoſe it, they are neither to be hearken'd to, nor in the leaſt attended: Let them pretend either to Conſcience, Reaſon, New Light, or what they will. *To the Law therefore, and to the Teſtimony, for if we ſpeak or write contrary*, both the Chriſtian and Proteſtant Faith (for God forbid they ſhould Claſh) peremptorily pronounce *we have no Light in us*; no, not the Light of common Reaſon, and Natural Honeſty.

THE caſe ſtanding thus, why is the certainty of our Faith of late ſo earneſtly contended? all reſolv'd into Doubt and Perplexity, and matters ſo repreſented as if we were ſure of nothing? Is it not the higheſt Ingratitude to God, after he has ſo fully, ſo clearly, and ſo infallibly reveal'd his Will to us, ſtill to confound our ſelves and others with If's and And's? And in Contempt of all his Care, ſo fully to direct, and guide us into all Truth, ſtill to make the Determinations of a Perverſe Will, or the idle Rambles of a ſickly Imagination, void all that he has done for us and ſo make his Sacred Word of no effect? Will the Sanctions of humane Laws bear being thus trifled with, and the Senſe of them ſo ſubjected to every idle Diſpute, where Intereſt and Folly alone can pretend to Debate? Let us then read the Statutes of Heaven as we do thoſe of Earth, and they will certainly be found equally plain, and deciſive.

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Had God Almighty indeed ſet us no Rule to regulate the Wilds of a vagrant Imagination, ſomething might kindly be ſaid in Favour of the Extravagances of this Nature; but when what he has done, is ſo entirely the Reverſe, how can we, how dare we argue at this rate? *Let God be true, tho' all the World be Lyars.* We muſt not flatter Men in their Errors; to call them the Reſolves of their Conſcience, their Reaſon, their Judgment, and the like is all Cant and Illuſion. The very Men that uſe this Plea, know it to be falſe, and that they are only other Words for Pride and Ill-Nature. If a bare *ipſe dixit* ſhall determine the Merit of a Cauſe, the vileſt Wretch would ſtill be Innocent. The World never heard of ſuch a thing as a profeſt Heretick. But it is a known Rule, grant one Abſurdity, and a thouſand will follow. Let it be once admitted, that whatever a mad Enthuſiaſt ſhall call his Light and Conſcience, and an Impudent Infidel his Reaſon and freedom of Thought, is really ſuch, and that the firſt don't Cant, and the laſt tell an audacious Lye, then indeed farewell Chriſtianity; farewell the perfect and unerring Law of God which our brave Fore-fathers took ſo much care to convey down to us, in the Streams of their honeſt Blood. *Light is Darkneſs, and Darkneſs is Light*, and the Apoſtle knew not what he ſaid, when he aſſerted *Life and Immortality to be brought to light by the Goſpel.*

I AM willing to hope, the Moderation of the Age is not yet come to this heighth: And have that Charity for ſome of thoſe, for whom this

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ort of Logick is made uſe of, as to believe, they would not be very fond of ſuch Concluſions: But it is in vain to Diſſemble, there are too many that would; and therefore it highly concerns them, who have argu'd at this wild rate, to conſider ſeriouſly what may be the Conſequence. To preſent to your view the bold Blaſphemies the Writings of ſome vile Wretches are fill'd with, (which uſed only to vent their Venom in Secret, in the Retirements, and Skulking-holes of Damnation) would be ſuch a Scene of Horror, as I am very loath to lay open; and I hope thoſe who have over-haſtily engag'd in this Argument, will ſo coolly weigh the matter, as to render it needleſs: But this I muſt inſiſt on, that our *common Faith* and *Salvation* ought not to be given up to the Paſſions and Prejudices of any Sects, any Parties whatſoever, tho' (as repreſented by ſome) their Number ſhould amount to Millions. It is impoſſible for us readily to conceive the Injury done, by ſuch a Practice, to the Chriſtian Religion in general: I don't ſay, that by it we *Crucify the Son of God afreſh*, but I am very ſure *we put him to an open Shame.* He, I confeſs, muſt know very little of the Chriſtian Religion, that is not convinc'd, it is much eaſier to Laugh at, than either Practice, or Underſtand it: But the exceeding Miſchief, the leaſt doubt of its certainty, in the Profeſſors has always done it, will, I hope, be ſeriouſly conſider'd before too late. *Atheiſm*, and *Infidelity*, are of an impudent encroaching Nature, and tho' in the Intention we may deſign them no Favour, by receding from the juſt certainty of our Holy Faith; and the Complement may be entirely

intended elſewhere; yet none ſhall be before them in the Application. I am not inſenſible, that Chriſtian Charity, and good Nature will, and ought ſtrongly to encline us, to have the kindeſt, and moſt favourable Thoughts, of all who are ſo unhappy as to be in Error: But when things are brought to this ſad Dilemma, that we muſt either pronounce ſome People wilfully Blind, or the Chriſtian Faith precarious, and doubtful, ſurely we need not be told which muſt have the Preference. *Charity*, 'tis true, *ſuffers long, and is kind*; but ſure it is neither Kindneſs, nor Charity, to flatter Men into Perdition. *If he that converteth one from the Error of his Ways, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and cover a multitude of Sins*, how ſadly the reverſe will be their Portion, who ſooth and indulge People in them!

I AM not unaware, that it will be readily ſuggeſted, that I run this Controverſy further than it was ever deſign'd by them who have engag'd in it; and draw Conſequences foreign and wide from the intent of what they have laid down; their End being not to give any Umbrage to the Pretenſions of *Atheiſts*, *Deiſts*, *Free-Thinkers*, &c. but only to perſuade us to entertain ſome kind Thoughts of our *honeſt Diſſenting Proteſtant Brethren*, who, tho' they differ from us, yet it is in Matters of ſo little Moment, that they are not worth a Quarrel; with abundance more of the ſame Strain.

IN anſwer to which, tho' I might very reaſonably inſiſt, that encouragement for *Atheiſm* and *Infidelity*, may be juſtly charged on them, for laying

ing down such Principles, as by fair, and necessary Consequence, may be apply'd in their Favour, who openly and impudently abet them, as well as to our *honest Protestant Dissenters*, to whom they would seem wholly to confine them: Yet because we will give all the scope, that can with any appearance of Reason be desir'd, we will pass this for the present by, and proceed to enquire whether some kind things have not been express'd by them, of *Atheists*, *Deists*, *Turks*, and *Infidels*, as they stand dignify'd and distinguish'd under these several Denominations: And if something of this kind can be prov'd, I hope our present Managers will be left wholly without Excuse.

IN a Letter then from a Lay-Gentleman, in Communion with the Church of *England*, (tho' Dissenting from her in some Points) to a Right Reverend Lord Bishop; we have these words * 'It is no wonder we find Christianity gain 'no Ground in the World, when most Christi- 'stians seem oblig'd to build their Religion on 'humane Authority, and do it accordingly; 'which must appear to a considering Infidel, to be 'robbing the Almighty of his Prerogative, 'and Mankind of the greatest Right they have 'a claim to. Bigots would do well to consider 'what tempted *Julian* to Apostatize to *Heathenism*; and what is that *Stone of Stumbling*, and '*Rock of Offence*, on which all the Sober, and 'considering Atheists and Deists of our Day split.

* *Second Edit.* p. 13, 14.

THE drift of this Paſſage before us, has been, and will be, the Buſineſs of this Undertaking to conſider: But that which at preſent I muſt obſerve, is the ſtrange and unheard of manner of Expreſſion. A ſober and conſidering Infidel! Atheiſt! Deiſt! *&c.* Good God! Did ever ſuch Words before drop from the Pen of a Chriſtian? I cannot, I dare not think, much leſs ſay, the Author is one of theſe himſelf; but I am very ſure, if he really were, he could not uſe kinder Words towards them.

OUR Bleſſed Lord has told us, *Out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh.* If this be the Caſe with him, he muſt pardon me if I tell him, his Atheiſt, his Deiſt, his Infidel, even in our Days, is ſo far from being a ſober and conſidering Man, that he is a Fool, the moſt egregious deſpicable Sot in humane Nature, ſunk below the common perception of a Rational Creature, and a diſgrace to the meaneſt of his Species. In ſhort, (as the excellent * Biſhop *Stillingfleet* has long before obſerv'd) 'It is well for 'us, in the Age we live in, that we have the 'Judgment of former Ages to appeal to, and of 'thoſe Perſons in them, whoſe Reputation for 'Wiſdom is yet unqueſtionable. For otherwiſe 'we might be born down by that ſpightful Ene'my to all Virtue and Goodneſs, the Impudence 'of ſuch, who it is hard to ſay, whether they 'ſhew it more in committing Sin, or in defend'ing it. Men! whoſe Manners are ſo bad, 'that

* *In his Sermon before the King*, March *the* 13th, 1666-7, p. 5.

that ſcarce any thing can be imagin'd worſe, unleſs it be the Wit they uſe to excuſe them! Such who take the meaſure of a Man's Perfections downwards, and the nearer they approach to the Beaſts, the more they think themſelves to act like Men.' If this worthy Prelate thought fit to expreſs himſelf with this quick, as well as beautiful Severity, when he view'd the *Atheiſt*, *Deiſt*, and *Infidel* of his Time, in only his own *Native Fool's Coat*, ſporting himſelf with Damnation, and valuing himſelf on his being weak enough to make a Jeſt of the moſt ſerious, and important thing in the World: How would his inimitable Eloquence have enlarg'd it ſelf, had he ſeen him dreſs'd by one of theſe Gentlemen like an *Angel of Light*, advanc'd from the *Seat of the Scorner*, to the Chair of the Saints; and preſented to a Biſhop, a Proteſtant Biſhop! as one of the ſober and conſidering Party! O Righteous God! are we thus abandon'd, thus ripe for Deſtruction! *Wilt thou not Viſit for theſe things? Will not thy Soul be aveng'd on ſuch a People as this*!

THUS far in Complement to our Home-bred Monſters. Another * is not willing to be ſo Geographical in his Charity, leſt you ſhould think him byaſs'd by that narrow Principle, which aſſerts, *There is no Name under Heaven, whereby we ſhall be ſaved, but that of Jeſus Chriſt.* For his Part, he is reſolv'd to convince the World at once, his Kindneſs is not entirely confin'd to *Engliſh* Infidels, and therefore tells us plainly,

* *Vid.* Mr. Steel's *Letter to a Member of Parliament*, p. 13. *Second Edition.*

plainly, That the *Mahometans* are as fully perſwaded of the Truth of what they profeſs, as Men can be: But ſure, notwithſtanding this Gentleman is ſo very peremptory in this Point, he will not pretend to ſay, That *invincible Ignorance*, the *Prejudice of Education*, much leſs the *Motives* of *Intereſt* or *Fear*, are ſufficient to form ſuch a *Perſuaſion*? To be fully perſwaded of any Opinion, (after the beſt Information has been given us) implies Care, Diligence, and Impartiality in our Search; and does he think all this has been done by the *Mahometans*? Will he dare to ſay ſo? If he does, I am ſure 'tis more than can juſtly be done for moſt Chriſtians. I am willing to pay the utmoſt Deference to this Gentleman's Character and Parts; but he muſt pardon me, if I chuſe rather to acquieſce with Biſhop † *Beveridge*: 'Neither can I believe (ſays 'he) that ever any *Mahometan*, or *Indian*, that 'did without Prejudice, ſet himſelf to read it thro' '(ſpeaking of the Bible) and to examine every 'Particular, by the Light of unbyaſs'd Reaſon, 'could ever ſay it was hatch'd in a human Brain; 'but that it is indeed of a heavenly Stamp, and 'Divine Authority.' I can't, for my Part, imagine what he can place this full Perſuaſion of *Mahometans* in: It don't lie ſure in the many ſevere Laws they have againſt any Enquiries into the Truth of their *Alcoran*? How Military ſoever his Diſpoſition may be, he will not ſure contend the Edge of the Sword is one of the moſt convincing Methods of Perſwaſion; this indeed is an Argument, their vile Original order'd ſtrenuouſly

* *Thoughts on Religion.* p. 24.

renuously to be urg'd; and if they have receded om the Severity of it, it shews they are not so lly perswaded of the Truth of what they pro- ss, as he has represented them. A great deal ore might be said to shew the Absurdity, as ell as Impiety of this bold Assertion; but my ief Design in producing it, being to let the orld see to what extravagant Lengths some Gentlemen have spun this Controversy; I shall ontent my self with what has been already hus cursorily offer'd, and proceed next to con- ider, whether the Faith of Dissenters is really of hat Nature, which is so much and so often in- isted on by these Gentlemen.

AND here, notwithstanding the Agreement between us and the *honest Protestant Dissenters*, so much talk'd of, were the many Differences (and those too in Points of the highest Consequence to Christianity in general) between us, laid with the utmost brevity before the Reader, it might fairly be the Work of an Age to collect them. I am very far from speaking it with pleasure, but it is in vain to dissemble in this Case, there is no *Heresy* so destructive to the *Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, as not to be abetted and avow'd by one Sect or other, that go under the common Name of *Protestant Dissenters*. A very little Enquiry will evince they are as far from the *Unity of the Faith*, as that of the *Church*; and that *Heresy* and *Schism*, tho' in their Nature distinct, *joyn Hand in Hand* against our excellent Establish'd Church of *England*. It would, I believe, exceed the Power of our four and twenty *English* Letters, to find Names for the many little skulking Sects and

Parties,

Parties, that are crept in among us, as they ſtand diſtinguiſh'd from each other. There are (as I have been inform'd) full ſixteen ſeveral and diſtinct Opinions among thoſe generally call'd *Anabaptiſts*: Some call themſelves *Generals*, i. e. believe Chriſt dy'd for the whole World; others *Particulars*, and theſe confine the Efficacy of his Death only to their own Congregation. Some think it their Duty to ſing Pſalms, others not. Some are *Socinians*, ſome *Millenarians*, ſome *ſeventh Day Men*, ſome they know not what themſelves. That we may, if poſſible, therefore range this wild Chaos of Principles into ſome Order, and gather the confuſs'd Atoms of *Proteſtant Diſſenſion* into ſome regular Form, we'll endeavour to take a View of this odd Mixture of Contradictions in three diſtinct Claſſes, as they ſtand diſtinguiſh'd under the well-known Denominations of *Quakers*, *Anabaptiſts*, and *Presbyterians*. And firſt let us conſider the Harmony between us and the People call'd *Quakers*.

NOW not to inſiſt, that the moſt conſiderable Writers for them have told us, there is no ſuch Place as *Heaven* or *Hell*; no ſuch Thing as a *Judgment*, but within; and that if we look for our *Saviour* to come to *Judge the World*, we may look while our Eyes drop out; no *Reſurrection of the Body*; that they are Equal with God, ſearch the Heart, with abundance more of ſuch horrid Blaſphemy: I ſay, not to inſiſt on any of theſe, (tho' ſhould they think themſelves injur'd in the Mention of them, we are ready to give full Proof of each Particular) we will endeavour to draw a Parallel between the *Quaker* and the Church

Church of *England* Man, with Respect to these two Points, *viz.*

First, The Rule of Faith.

Secondly, The chief Object of it.

THE only Rule of Faith which the Church of *England* is determin'd by, has been before declar'd, the holy Scriptures, which she asserts full, perfect, and sufficient. In Opposition to which, * *George Fox* (and in this all his Brethren concur) tells us, 'The Light, that lighteth every 'Man that cometh into the World, is sufficient 'to Salvation, without any other MEANS or 'DISCOVERY.' And lest this should be thought not particularly enough exclusive of the holy Scriptures, in another Place he tells Mr. *Christopher Wade*, † 'That the Scriptures are not the Word 'of God, as he had blasphemously affirmed:' and that we might not be at a loss to know what in his Opinion really is the Word of God, he tells us (speaking of his own Writings) 'To you all 'this is the Word of God.' ‡ Another (from whose Learning and natural Genius we might reasonably have expected better Things) extends the Power of this their wondrous Light yet further, and voids not only the *Creed*, but the *Decalogue* too, telling us, 'That what was a Com-'mandment to any Servants of God of old 'Time, are not Commandments to us, unless

 required

* *Great Mystery*. p. 47. † *Ibid.* p. 246. *Printed Letter from* George Fox, 13th *of the* 12th Month. 1683. ‡ William Penn's *Reason against Railing*, *Printed* 1673, p. 150. *Article* 21.

'required by the ſame Spirit (by which he 'means the Light within) anew.

NOR is the chief Object of our Faith, *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God bleſſed for ever*, better treated by theſe People, than the Rule he hath ſet us. The Reality of his Incarnation, the Truth of his Epiphany, the Merits of his Death, and Paſſion, the Juſtification of his Reſurrection, the very Certainty of his being, as now *ſitting at the Right Hand of God*; and the Hypoſtatic Union of his Divine and Humane Nature, are all flatly deny'd by them, in Terms of that outrageous and ſhocking Blaſphemy, that I can't but repeat them with Horror: And did not the Readers Satisfaction, neceſſarily require the producing the particulars, would gladly decline ſo ungrateful a Task.

'THE Devil was in thee (ſays G. *Fox* *) 'thou ſay'ſt thou art ſav'd by Chriſt without 'thee, and ſo haſt recorded thy ſelf a Repro-'bate. The Apoſtle (ſays Mr. *Bayley* †) preach'd 'Chriſt the Word nigh in the Heart, and in the 'Mouth, and the ingrafted Word which is able 'to ſave the Soul; ſo he did not preach a viſible 'Chriſt with Fleſh, and Bones, as you do. '*Paul* preach'd God that made the World, that 'was far from every one of us, the inviſible 'God; but you preach a Viſible Man, with 'Fleſh, and Bones, at a great Diſtance from all 'People, above, where the Sun, Moon, and 'Stars are. Faith (ſays Mr. *Penn* ‡) in the Hi-'ſtory

* *Great Myſtery*, p. 250 † Bayley's *Works*, p. 600, ‡ Quaker *a new Nick Name*, p. 6,

'ſtory of Chriſt's outward Manifeſtation, a 'deadly Poiſon theſe latter Ages have been in-'fected with, to the Deſtruction of Godly Li-'ving. This Light in thee (ſays Mr. *Criſp* *) *wherewith thou art enlightened is the Life of Jeſus,* John 1. 4. 'which he hath given a Ranſom for Man, that 'was not Natural, as ſome have fooliſhly ima-'gin'd, for if it were Natural, it could not be a 'Ranſom for Man out of Sin. This we deny (ſays the forementionn'd Mr. *Penn* †) Juſtifica-'tion by the Righteouſneſs, which Chriſt has 'fulfilled in his own Perſon for us, wholly with-'out us, and boldly affirm in the Name of the 'Lord, it to be the Doctrine of Devils, and an 'Arm of the Sea of Corruption which does now 'deluge the whole World. The Blood of Chriſt (ſays Mr. *Eccles* ‡) is no more than the Blood of 'another Saint. Your imagin'd God beyond 'the Stars, and your Carnal Chriſt, is utterly 'deny'd. So the Sword of the Lord drawn * 'delivers its ſelf. To ſay Chriſt is God and 'Man in one Perſon, is a Lye,' as the ſame Author goes on,

I AM very ſenſible the deteſtable Hereſy and Blaſphemy, contain'd in theſe Paſſages, would Naturally lead the good natur'd Reader to think I have dealt ſomething injuriouſly by them: Had not I put it in his Power, by conſulting the Margin, to give himſelf the Satisfaction of ſeeing the Books and Pages where they are to be found. And that I may not be charg'd with blending the Guilty with the Innocent: I fur-

* *Collection* p. 160. † *Serious Apology*, p. 148. ‡ *Letter* to R. Porter. * *Sword of the Lord drawn.* p. 5.

ther do some of them the Justice, to acknowledge they do not run this wild Length. Some of them have had the Honesty and Courage to defend the History of the Gospel, against these bold Blasphemers. An early Instance of this, we have in one Mr. *Gorden*, who strenuously inculcates the Truth of our Saviour's Incarnation, from the Words of St. *John* the Baptist, *viz. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sins of the World.* Mr. *Keith* also, while under the Delusion of these unhappy People, warmly contended this Point with Mr. *Penn*, and his Associates; nor has the Controversy slept since it has pleas'd God thoroughly to open his Eyes: The Distinction of *Pennist*, and *Medeist*, being still well known, the former asserting no Christ but within, and the latter maintaining the Truth of the History of the Gospel against such an impudent Blasphemy; But tho' the *Medeists* and we are tolerably agreed in the Object of our Christian Faith, yet in the Rule, the Difference between us is the same with the *Penn ists*: Both asserting their Light within, the dernier Rule of Faith, and not the holy Scriptures. And so much may suffice to show the Difference between the *honest Protestant Dissenters* call'd *Quakers*, and us of the Church of *England*.

PROCEED we next to the second Class of our Protestant Dissenters, as rang'd in the order we have plac'd them; And they are generally known by the Name of *Anabaptists*. A People fruitful of every Heresy, prone to Rebellion,

and

and branded by * an Article of our Church, in Principles as Impugners of their Neighbours Property. Some ſhort hints of the many Monſtrous Opinions of theſe People have already been made; what we at preſent ſhall confine our ſelves to, is only the Controverſy between us, about the Subjects of Baptiſm, which they (for this is an Opinion common to them all) aſſert, are *Adult Perſons*, excluſive of *Children*.

THE Senſe of our Church is fully expreſs'd in her † Article of Baptiſm thus, *viz.* 'The Bap-'tiſm of Children, is in any wiſe to be retained 'in the Church, as moſt agreeable to the Inſti-'tution of Chriſt.' The importance of this will not be thought Light and Superficial, by all that conſider the wretched Degeneracy of our Nature, as declar'd in the Ninth Article, and the Initiation, Regeneration, Adoption, *&c.* previouſly laid down, as the Privileges our Baptiſm, as it were by an Inſtrument, conveys to us. Nor will it ſurely be pretended a Matter of little Moment, whether our Children have a Federal Right to Salvation ſecur'd them, by the explicite Terms of the Goſpel; if not, the Difference between us, and this ſet of Proteſtant Diſſenters alſo, muſt conſequently be reſolv'd into a Point of the higheſt, and moſt important Nature; and we muſt be ſtill at the greateſt loſs to conceive what ſome People mean, by inſiſting ſo much on the inconſiderableneſs of the Difference between us and their *honeſt Proteſtant Diſſenters*.

WELL,

* *Article* XXVIII.
† *Article* XXVII.

WELL, there is now but one Sett of Proteſtant Diſſenters more, the Nature of whoſe Principles we are engag'd to enquire after; and if we are diſappointed here alſo of the inconſiderableneſs of our Differences, ſo much talk'd of, we know not where elſe to ſeek them. And theſe are generally known by the Name of *Presbyterians.*

A PEOPLE, ſaid by their preſent Advocates, to differ from us ſcarce in any thing of Moment: And which is more. wonderful, they themſelves make it one Plea for their Separation, that they differ from us in meer Trifles: An Argument that ſounds ſo very ſtrange from them, that did we not continnally find them fond of uſing it, a Man would be tempted to think 'twas only Banter. 'Tis as if a Criminal at the Bar ſhould Plead, the Deceaſed gave him no Provocation, as the Reaſon of his Murdering of him. But whatever may be pretended of this kind, it is all Illuſion. Their Orthodoxy will do 'em no more hurt, than the reſt of their Proteſtant Brethren. Were the many Blaſphemies to be collected, that occur in their darling Point of Election; the perverſe Diſputes they have rais'd againſt the Doctrine of Regeneration; their obſtinate Contempt of all Forms of Prayer, even to the excluding of that made, and commanded to be uſed by our Bleſſed Lord himſelf; their Rebellious Tenets, with reſpect to the Civil Magiſtrate; their Irreverence and Prophaneneſs, in all their publick Acts of Religion, particularly their impudent Poſture of

ſitting

Sitting at the Communion. Were all theſe, and a great deal more, put in a proper View, it were as eaſy to reconcile Light and Darkneſs, as them and the Church of *England*.

BUT waving theſe, we ſhall only point out one thing more, that makes, as we conceive, an important Difference between us, and theſe People; and that is, we muſt deny their being any part of the Catholick Church of *Chriſt*; and this for two Reaſons.

Firſt, BECAUSE they have not among them any ſuch thing as a Prieſthood, or a Miniſtry.

Secondly, BECAUSE they have voluntarily (by an unjuſt Separation) cut themſelves off from the Catholick Church. And firſt, becauſe they have no Prieſthood, *&c.*

FOR the better clearing of this, we are to conſider, what in the Senſe of our Church, is thought neceſſary to the making a Prieſt, or Miniſter. This as determin'd in one of her * Articles, is a LAWFUL CALL, or Miſſion, and thoſe, (as the Words of the Article are) 'We ought to judge Lawfully call'd and ſent, 'which be choſen and called to this Work, by 'Men who have publick Authority given unto 'them in the Congregation, to call and ſend 'Miniſters into the Lord's Vineyard.' The Perſons to whom this Power only belongs, are (in the Book of Conſecration) declar'd to be the Biſhops; which is further ratify'd by the 36th

* *Article* XXIII.

36th Article, where they, and only they that are Ordain'd by them, are decreed to be RIGHTLY, ORDERLY, and LAWFULLY Called and Ordered. Now that thoſe Perſons that take upon them the Miniſterial Office among the People called *Presbyterians*, or *Independants*, ever had ſuch a Call, or Ordination (excepting ſome that formerly Apoſtatiz'd to them) is what can't be, and indeed is not aſſerted by any: So that it neceſſarily follows, that in the Judgment of our Church, their Orders (whatever they may ſay to the contrary) are Null and Void; and conſequently (in the Senſe of our Church) the People called *Presbyterians*, or *Independants*, have no ſuch thing as a Prieſthood, or Miniſtry among them.

THIS muſt be, and indeed is allow'd by them I am contending with; and therefore we proceed next to inſiſt, that whatever theſe Perſons take upon them to act as Miniſters, is certainly invalid too; but this is what they are very hard to be brought to acknowledge. And 'tis, I confeſs, *a hard ſaying* (and tho' I cannot run into our Modern Charity of ſoothing and flattering them in this their Perverſneſs; yet) I wiſh from the bottom of my Soul, it were not a true one. Our Men of Temper may uſe what Arts they pleaſe to blind this Matter, and excite the Paſſions of honeſt, and good-natur'd Men about it; but the importance of the Point exacts of us not to diſſemble herein: And we muſt plainly inſiſt, that Federally ſpeaking, not one of the *Diſſenters* have ſuch a Thing as either the *Word*, or *Sacraments* among them. For let them be as noiſy as they

they will, it is impoſſible for that which is allow'd to be Invalid in the Agent, to be Valid in the Subject. *Nemo dat, quod non habet*, is a Maxim that hath not only the Authority of Schools, but the Reaſon, and eternal Nature of Things on its ſide. And were it otherwiſe, not only the Order of the Prieſthood, but all Order and Government would neceſſarily diſſolve into Anarchy and Confuſion. Will any Man be ſo abſurd to ſay, my aſſuming the Title of a Juſtice of Peace, would make me ſo, with reſpect to thoſe I ſhould pretend to command? Would not every Body laugh at the Folly, as well as Impudence of ſuch a Pretence? If then the Prieſthood, or Miniſtry of Chriſt be (as the Author to the *Hebrews* expreſſes it) *An honour no Man taketh to himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was* Aaron: And that, (as St. *Paul* tells his *Epheſians*) *When our Lord aſcended up on high, he gave Gifts unto Men, ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Evangeliſts, ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt, till we all come to the unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God.* Certainly we may venture further to interrogate with the Apoſtle, *How can they Preach except they be ſent?* And if not Preach, neither can they adminiſter the Sacraments; and conſequently whatever they preſume to do of that kind, is Null and Void.

Heb. 5. 4.

Eph. 4. 10. 11, 12.

THE Caſe being thus, the *Non-entity* of theſe unhappy Peoples Church, appears upon a double Account: *Firſt*, As wanting a *Miniſtry*, which the Apoſtle makes one of the Conſtitutive Parts

of a Church, they being appointed for *the edifying the Body of Christ*. And, *Secondly*, As wanting the *due Preaching of the pure Word, and right Administration of the Sacraments*, which our Church in her * Article, makes the Essential Parts of a Church. So that the Difference between us and this People, as already consider'd, is a Priesthood, and no Priesthood; a Church and no Church.

THE obstinate Contempt these People have always shewn (with respect to the Merit of the Cause) of all the Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity, that like a Torrent runs against them, is too well known by them, who appear their present Defenders, to be in the least dissembled; and indeed, so flagrant are the Evidences of this kind against them, that nothing, one would think, but the Obstinacy of a *Few*, could withstand their Force. But were all these pass'd by, and what they so unreasonably contend for admitted; yet such is the Case of our present *English* Dissenting Teachers, that upon their own Principles they cannot pretend to a regular outward Call. For were it allow'd in their Original Institution, that *Presbyters* had the Power of Ordination; yet sure it won't be pretended those properly so call'd at the Time of the Reformation, (from whom these People would be thought regularly to derive their Ordination) had such a Power. If they had not this Power given at their own Consecration, (as 'tis very certain they had not) how they should be able to

* *Article* XIX.

to give such a Power to their Successors, must and will be a Paradox for any reasonable Man to conceive. Nay, they were so far from pretending to, or exercising such a Power (I mean the first *Nonconformists*, as they stood distinguish'd from the *Brownists*) that* they 'pronounc'd the 'Ministry of the Church of *England* a Lawful 'Ministry, charging those who separated from 'it, as guilty of a shameful and odious Schism.' So that were we to trace the Ordination of the present *Presbyterian*, or *Independant* Teachers about an hundred Years backwards, we shall find it deriv'd from mere Lay-Men, and all their regular Succession probably terminate in some Gifted Cobler, or Taylor, among the Separatists, formerly known by the Name of *Brownists*. And indeed so fully sensible our other Sectarists appear to be of this, that they are not at all solicitous to prove their outward Call to the Ministry, thinking themselves sufficiently qualify'd by that which they term an inward one; and were the *Presbyterians* and *Independants* once come to this degree of Light, they'd find it perhaps one of the prettiest Turns for a good Stomach, the World has yet ever heard of.

THE ridiculous Vanity of these People in pretending to a regular Mission by Succession, will naturally tempt a Man to some little Merriments; But that we may not seem unmindful of the importance of this Matter, give me leave seriously to lay before you the Advice of that excellent Saint, and Martyr *Ignatius*, in his E-

* *Answer to* Ainsworth, *Preface* p. 17. *See more in Bishop* Stillingfleet's *Unreasonableness of Separation*. Part I.

piſtle to the *Trallians*, 'In like manner (ſays he) '* let all Reverence the Deacons as Jeſus 'Chriſt; and the Biſhop as the Father; and the 'Presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God, and 'College of the Apoſtles; without theſe there 'is no Church. In that alſo to the *Philadelphi-'ans*, He tells them he cried whilſt he was a-'mongſt them, He ſpake with a loud Voice, at-'tend to your Biſhop, and to the Presbytery, 'and to the Deacons. And in another Place of 'the ſame Epiſtle, he preſſes them to abſtain from 'thoſe evil Herbs which Jeſus does not dreſs, 'becauſe ſuch are not the Plantation of the Fa-'ther. For as many as are of God, and of Je-'ſus Chriſt, are alſo with their Biſhop. Be not 'deceived, Brethren: If any one follows him 'that makes a Schiſm in the Church, he ſhall 'not inherit the Kingdom of God. If any one 'walks after any other Opinion, he agrees not 'with the Paſſion of Chriſt. Wherefore let it 'be your Endeavour to partake all of the ſame 'holy Euchariſt. For there is but one Fleſh of 'our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and one Cup of the 'Unity of his Blood; one Altar; as alſo there 'is one Biſhop, together with his Presbytery, 'and the Deacons my Fellow Servants; that 'ſo whatſoever you do, you may do it accor-'ding to the Will of God.

TO convey a juſt Idea to the Readers Mind, of the Authority of theſe Paſſages, it will not I hope be thought an impertinent Digreſſion, to give him a ſhort account of their Author.

This

* *Genuine Epiſtles of the Apoſtolick Fathers.* p. 88. *ibid.* p. 108. p. 106.

' † This excellent Perſon then was Biſhop of *Antioch*, documented with his School Fellow St. *Polycarp*, by St. *John* the Apoſtle, and made a a Biſhop by him. He is ſaid to be the Child our Saviour took in his Arms, when he recommended the Imitation of little Children to his Diſciples, and from thence to have the Name of *Theophorus* apply'd to him, as ſignifying one born or carry'd by God. And that which ſeems more to confirm this Opinion, in all his Epiſtles he ſtiles himſelf *Ignatius*, who is alſo called *Theophorus*. In his Anſwer to *Trajan*, when he ask'd him who *Theophorus* was, he tells him, One who has Chriſt in his Breaſt, making it a Name common to all Chriſtians; and indeed this, in the Judgment of the Reverend Tranſlator, is thought the moſt genuine Senſe of the Word. He narrowly eſcap'd Martyrdom in the Reign of *Domitian*, but in that of *Trajan*, was order'd to be made the Entertainment of the *Romans*, being Torn to Pieces by wild Beaſts at their Amphitheatre. Various are the Times he is ſaid to be Martyr'd in, the loweſt date is *Anno* 116, on the 13th of *January*, in the *Roman* Calends, *Sura* and *Syneſius* then a ſecond time made Conſuls. He was born at *Nora* in *Sardinia*, and made Biſhop of *Antioch* by the Apoſtle, on the deceaſe of *Evodius* his Predeceſſor; preſided there above Forty Years, and probably was at leaſt Fourſcore Years old when he was Martyr'd.' In fine, he was a Fellow-Labourer with the Apoſtles, particularly St. *John*, and made that happy Advantage

* *Vid. Life of St.* Ignatius, *in Genuine Epiſtles of the Apoſtolick Fathers. By the Archbiſhop of* Canterbury.

vantage of the Correſpondence, as to be Eminent in his Gifts, and Graces. His Writings, tho' not plac'd in the Sacred Canon, were always eſteem'd little inferior; and the leaſt we can ſay of them is, that they were dictated by the ſame Spirit, and an inſpir'd Comment on it. To ſtrike this, if poſſible, yet deeper into our Minds, I ſhall conclude with that earneſt Caveat of our Bleſſed Lord himſelf, *viz. Beware of falſe Prophets who come to you in Sheeps Cloathing, but inwardly are Ravening Wolves.* Beware of them in the Simplicity of their Appearance, their Sheeps Cloathing, their Arrogant Boaſt of a Power and Honour that don't belong to them! but beware of them yet more, as they are Ravening Wolves, tearing and rending the Flock of Chriſt to pieces; which naturally leads me to the ſecond Reaſon of their Churches Nullity, their unjuſt Sepa, ration, *&c.*

UNJUST it ſurely muſt appear, in every honeſt, and ſerious Churchmans Eye. To ſee a Church ſo truely Primitive and Apoſtolical; ſuch a Glory to the Reformation; the ſtrongeſt Bulwark againſt Idolatry and Superſtition; the Pride of its Friends, and the Envy of its Enemies, baſely Deſerted, Calumniated, Inſulted, Sawn, and Torn aſunder, by a Set of wayward, ignorant, and unreaſonable People, muſt certainly raiſe in the Breaſt of all her genuine Offspring, not only the ſtrongeſt Conviction, but higheſt Deteſtation of ſo execrable a Practice! Such is the aggravated Guilt, that its very Abetters ſtart with Horror at it; and when they are home preſs'd with the weighty Charge, retire, or elſe deny it with Confuſion. To ſpend our

time

time in detecting the Cobweb Frauds they have us'd to elude this Charge, would affront the Readers Reaſon, and laviſh away his time. That they do ſeparate, in ſpight of all their Frivolous Denials, and ſeparate with a Vengeance too, * let their own *Savoy* Diſputants declare, when they own'd 'the Diviſion of that fatal 'Conſequence, that Peace and Unity could not 'be preſerv'd, unleſs 'twere put an end to.'

AS for thoſe we are more immediately concern'd with, tho' when they have a mind to play the Caſuiſt, they have often acknowledg'd, and (to do them Juſtice) prov'd too, with a great deal of Learning, both the reality, and injuſtice of their Separation; yet at other times they have I know not what ſort of Qualms come upon them; they are ſo loth to diſoblige the Diſſenters with any truths of this kind, that we can get nothing from them but Hums and Haws, and if we preſs them hard with their Duty in this Point, drop out perhaps ſome ſly Inſinuation, that ſince the Toleration, the Caſe is alter'd, and they can't properly now be call'd Separatiſts; and if they think you are ſo very ſilly as to ſwallow the Fallacy, proceed from thence very gravely to inferr, they are now no longer Schiſmaticks, but our Brethren, and rather than quarrel with you, if you will have a Schiſm, it ſhall lie on the Church of *England* it ſelf.

THE ridiculous Sophiſtry, and Hobbiſm, † contain'd in this popular Topick, have, I doubt

* Calamy's *Abridgment of* Mr. Baxter's *Life*, Cap. 8th, *in his Account of the Diſpute at the* Savoy. † Hobs *Reſolves all Divine Sanctions into humane Policy. Vide* Leviathan.

doubt not, already anticipated, in the Eye of the Judicious Reader, the trouble of further Reply: But the Induſtry and Noiſe of ſome, and the Indolence, and Careleſsneſs, (not to ſay Treachery) of others, render ſomething needful to be ſaid to it.

THAT the Prime, or firſt Intent of all Laws, whether Divine, or Humane, is, that the Preceptive Part of them be obey'd, is what our Acute Politicians will not ſure deny. This being admitted, it will irrefragably appear, that their Separation is not ſo much as conniv'd at; nay, is totally condemn'd by the Laws, as they now ſtand in our Statutes. For certainly the Penalties being not inflicted, can never in Reaſon be urg'd to diſſolve the Preceptive Sanction of the Law, and therefore notwithſtanding an Exemption from that, the Practice ſtill remains condemn'd by the Law, and thoſe who are Culpable of it, are yet as guilty in the Eye of the Law, as they were before the Penalty was taken off. But not to encourage ſo Ignorant and Impudent a Fallacy, we ought to reject the very Foundation of it; the Charge of their Schiſm not at all turning on the breach of any Humane, but a Divine Law. So that were they not only Tolerated, but as they (ſometimes Impudently) tell us, Eſtabliſh'd, in their Separation, they would be ſtill the ſame they were, tho' back'd in it by all the humane Laws in the World.

AND this (by the way) ſerves to acquit the Epiſcopal Church of *Scotland* from the ridiculous charge of Schiſm. For (notwithſtanding the ſucceſsful

ſucceſsful Rebellion of the Kirk has got the *Presbyterians* the Name of an Eſtabliſhment) their not joyning with them is not juſtly to be charg'd as a Rent, or Schiſm, but bravely maintaining their Primitive Conſtitution, and agreeable to the Command of an Apoſtle, *avoiding thoſe that cauſe Diviſions.* And this will not ſeem ſtrange at all to any, that conſider, that we ought to fetch our Diſtinctions of Good and Evil, from the unerring and immutable Laws of God, and not from the various and ſhifting Viciſſitudes of thoſe of Men.

BUT to return from this (tho' I hope not improper) Digreſſion. That theſe People do Separate, and that unjuſtly too (after this little Skirmiſh) from the Church of *England*, I think we may take for granted. But the main Difficulty I know will be thought to be ſtill behind, *viz.* To prove that by this Separation, they are alſo cut off from being a part of the Catholick Church in general.

AGAINST this I am very ſenſible I ſhall have all their United Force drawn up. To have all our honeſt Proteſtant Diſſenters, eſpecially our darling *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, at once thrown over the Pale of the Catholick Church, for ſuch a Trifle only, as Separating from the Church of *England*, will be ſure to load me with a ſufficient ſhare of ill Names. 'Twill be Demonſtration as clear as any in *Euclid*, I am for the *Pretender*, if not a *Jeſuit* in Diſguiſe, or perhaps the *Scarlet Whore* her ſelf in Maſquerade.

BUT to evince I am not to be frighted by these Mobb Practices, I shall still go on boldly to maintain the honest Truths our holy Mother the Church of *England* has taught us; Nor shall the base and ungenerous Calumnies of Moderation from within, or Phanaticism from without, at all discourage me.

IN order then, to give the Reader all possible Satisfaction in this matter: It seems necessary for us to convey to his Mind, a distinct and proper Idea of what we call the Catholick Church. And here the late Pious and Learned Prelate, Arch-Bishop *Sharp*, has so Judiciously stated this already for us, that nothing is further needful, than barely to Transcribe him.

'FOR the clearing this, (saith he) let it be 'taken Notice of, That the Method which our 'Saviour set on foot for our Salvation, doth not 'so much consider us as single Persons, as joyn-'ed together in one common Society. It was 'his design to gather to himself a Church out of 'Mankind, to erect and form to himself a Body 'Politick, of which himself would be the Head, 'and particular Christians the Members; and in 'this Method, through Obedience to his Laws 'and Government, to bring Men to Salvation. 'This is variously set forth to us in the *New 'Testament*; sometimes *Christ* and *Christians*, are
John 15. 1. 'represented under the Notion of a *Vine*, of
1 *Cor.* 12. 'which he is *the Root*, and they *the Branches*. 'Sometimes under the Notion of a *Natural Body*, 'of which Christ is *the Head*, and all Believers

'*the*

the Members. And accordingly, whatever *Christ* is ſaid to have done or ſuffer'd for Mankind, he is ſaid to have done or ſuffer'd for them, not as ſcatter'd Individuals, but as incorporated into a Church. Thus *Christ loved the Church, and gave himſelf for it.* *Christ redeemed the Church with his own Blood.* *Christ is the Saviour of his Body*; that is to ſay, the Church; with many other Paſſages of the like Importance. And it is very plain, that Baptiſm, which is by all acknowleg'd to be the Rite of initiating us into Chriſtianity, is in Scripture declar'd to be the Rite, whereby we are enter'd and admitted into the Church. Thus St. *Paul* expreſly tells us, that *by one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body.*' So far his Grace.

Eph. 4. 25. Acts 20. 28. Eph. 5. 23. 1 Cor. 12. 13.

THIS being premiſ'd, whether we take the Catholick Church, under the Metaphor of a *Vine*, of which *Chriſt is the Root*, and the Church of *England* a *Branch*; or of a Natural Body, of which *Chriſt is the Head*, and the Church of *England* a *Member*: The Concluſion will be equally juſt, that whatever is cut off from any Part, or Member thereof, is equally cut off from the whole. For to go to the firſt Inſtance, a *Vine*; That that Leaf, or Twig thereof, that is cut by the Gardiner off of any particular Branch, is equally, and as really cut off from the whole, and as much to all the Ends and Purpoſes thereof, ceaſes to be a Part of the Whole, as the particular Branch, from whenc 'twas taken, is a Truth

* *Sermon before the Lord Mayor, on the Things that make for Peace*, pag. 5, 6.

the meaneſt Peaſant can demonſtrate. And he that thinks that of a *Natural Body* would not conclude the ſame, may make an Experiment in the Amputation of a ſingle Finger, and then reſolve whether it be any longer a Part of his Body, when taken from his Hand. In ſhort, what we have here aſſerted, is ſo evident in the Reaſon and Nature of Things, that he that contends it, muſt be loſt not only to the cleareſt Convictions of Reaſon, but thoſe of his very Senſes.

BUT plain as this is, the many little Subterfuges uſed to elude it, require ſome Conſideration in theſe Papers. We are told then, that tho' it ſhould be admitted, the Diſſenters are ſeparated from that particular Part of the Catholick Church, eſtabliſh'd in *England*, yet it does not therefore follow, they are thereby ſeparated from the whole Catholick Church; becauſe it has ever been allow'd, that a hearty Aſſent to the Creed, or, in the Opinion of ſome, to the ſingle Doctrine of the *Trinity*, is ſufficient to entitle a Man to a real Memberſhip, and Communion with the Catholick Church. In ſhort, the Bands of Unity in the Catholick Church, are *One Faith, One Baptiſm*, not *one Ceremony, one Policy*, with a great deal more, which might be produc'd, to the ſame Effect.

BUT this is ſuch a wild and ſenſeleſs Confuſion of Hereſy and Schiſm, as is peculiar to the Divinity of this Age. For as it is as evident as any Thing can be, that *Hereſy* and *Schiſm* are Things in their Nature diſtinct; ſo it will equally appear upon the leaſt Reflection, that either of them are

are ſufficient, to exclude any Body of Men from being a Part of the Catholick Church. Nay, were a Man to run this Point to the Rigour, it were eaſy to prove, that a Schiſmatick, as ſuch, is more fully, and to all Intents and Purpoſes cut off from the Catholick Church, than a Heretick. For *Hereſy*, properly and ſtrictly ſpeaking, is not a Breach of the Unity, but Corruption of the Purity of the Catholick Church. A Heretick in the Church is like an ulcerated Member in the Body, which, tho' for the Preſervation of the whole, it often proves neceſſary to cut it off, it does not, 'till it is ſo cut off, ceaſe to be a Part of the Body, however corrupted and gangreen'd. But now *Schiſm* in the very Act, is an entire Amputation from the whole Body; for let it have been never ſo ſound a Member before it was cut off, yet when it is cut off, it as much ceaſes to be a Part of the Body, as the moſt rotten and ulcerated Member in the World. It is further obſervable in this caſe, that the Heretick is entirely Paſſive, with reſpect to any *Schiſm* commenc'd on his Account; he does not cut off himſelf, but is cut off by the Church (in her Excommunication, or the like) but the *Schiſmatick* is as entirely active, and freely and voluntarily cuts off himſelf.

BUT were it admitted, that *Hereſy* in it ſelf (abſtracted from the Cenſure of the Church) does cut a Man off from being a Member of the Catholick Church, will it therefore follow, that the Unity of the Catholick Church cannot be broken by any thing except *Hereſy*? Is there no Way to kill a Man but poyſoning of him? will not the

Axe

Axe as effectually do his Buſineſs, as the Peſtilence? or will not a Building as ſurely fall to Pieces for want of being duly cemented together, as when its Materials are never ſo rotten and decay'd? And is not the Caſe the ſame in the Church? Does not our bleſſed Lord himſelf aſſure us, *A Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand?* And is not the Catholick Church his Kingdom? What is there plain, if this may be eluded? If the Bonds of Unity are *One Faith, One Baptiſm*, why don't we make it evident by our Practice? How dare People Separate that have one Creed common to them all? Is not the *Communion of Saints* an Article of this Creed? And does not the holy Scripture require us to joyn in the ſtricteſt Harmony and Unanimity in the Worſhip of God? *not only with one Heart, but one Mouth*; and be ſo far *from forſaking the Aſſembling our Selves together, as the manner of ſome is*, that like the firſt and beſt Patterns of Church-Communion, we ſhould meet together *with one Accord*, and, if poſſible, in one Place? '* The Unity of the Chriſtian Church '(as Biſhop *Stillingfleet* obſerves) is to be preſerv'd 'by the Bond of Peace, and as that Unity ſup-'poſes one Body, and one Spirit; and the Mem-'bers of that Body, as they are joyn'd to one 'Head, is call'd one Lord, ſo they are joyn'd to-'gether by one Faith, and one Baptiſm; there-'fore, as the Unity of the Church is founded on 'ſome External Bonds as well as Internal, that 'is, one Faith and one Baptiſm, as well as one 'Lord and one Spirit; ſo the Manifeſtation of

'how

* *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*, p. 210. ibid. 194, 195, 196.

'this Union ought to be by external Acts; for 'how can this Unity be discover'd by Acts meerly 'Internal and Spiritual, as being present in Spirit, 'inward Love to the Members, to which let me add, agreeing in all necessary Points of Faith, or the like? Therefore we will conclude with this incomparable Master of Controversy; 'The 'Obligation to preserve the Unity of the Church, 'doth imply a Joyning together, with other 'Members of the Church, in the common and 'publick Acts of Religion,' and not in the emp-'ty Cant of Consent in the Creed, or any other 'Pretence whatever.

WERE we to consult Antiquity, we shall always find this Plea us'd by all the several *Schismaticks* Church History mentions. Thus the *Meletians* in *Egypt*, are said by *Epiphanius* to hold the same Faith with the Catholick Christians. So did the followers of *Audæus*; those of *Eustathius Sebastienus*; the *Donatists*, the *Luciferians* and *Novatians*: Notwithstanding which, St. *Cyprian* charges the Abettors of this *Schism* with *Pride and Arrogance*; and tho' they pleaded they had the same Faith with the Catholick Church, yet he will not admit *that to be the true Faith, which hath no Charity*, and insists *there can be no true Charity, where Men do thus break in Pieces the Unity of the Church*. It were very easy to swell these Papers with abundance more of this kind: But I shall content my self with what has been thus cursorily offer'd, and leave the Curious more amply to satisfy themselves, out of the unanswerable Pieces of that great Prelate, referr'd to in the Margin,

from

from whence I took what I have here repreſented.

UPON the whole then, we may venture to aſſert, the Unity of the Catholick Church does conſiſt at leaſt of two Parts; the one *in our Creed*, call'd in Scripture, *the Unity of the Faith*, the Breach of which is *Hereſy*; and the other *in our Practice*, call'd *the Bond of Peace*, the Breach of which is *Schiſm*; and that either *Hereſy* or *Schiſm* are ſufficient to cut any Body of People off from being Parts, or Members of the Catholick Church; and therefore, tho' the *Presbyterians*, &c. were not chargeable with breaking the *Unity of the Faith*; yet are they entirely excluded the Pale of the Catholick Church, by only breaking *the Bond of Peace*.

OUR *Caſuiſts* finding themſelves thus fail'd by this modern Project of confounding *Hereſy* and *Schiſm*, and that they will after all appear not only diſtinct in their Nature, but alſo either of them ſeparately conſider'd, ſufficient to cut their good Friends the Diſſenters off from the Catholick Church, attempt next very gravely to diſtinguiſh the latter away; and therefore they tell us, we are miſtaken in our Notion of *Schiſm*, for that, according to the Scripture Account of it, it does not ſo much conſiſt in different Modes of Worſhip, or Ceremonies, and the like, as in the want of *true Love* and Charity: And therefore, tho' the Diſſenters do differ from us in ſome Things of a trivial and inconſiderable Nature, yet not being wanting of *a true Love*, and *Chriſtian Charity*,

Charity, they are not juſtly to be charg'd with *Schiſm*.

BUT after all this Cant, we muſt wonder from what Scripture theſe Gentlemen fetch this their fine new-ſpun Notion. For, were we to abſtract our Ideas never ſo much in this Matter, it can't be imagin'd what Service it could do them. That the Word *Schiſm*, in its proper and moſt genuine Import, ſignifies Diviſion, or cutting aſunder, every Body that is capable of the Uſe of a Lexicon, cannot be Ignorant; and for thoſe whoſe Education has not rais'd them to this, if they will give themſelves the Trouble to conſult the Margin of a large Bible, they will find the Word Diviſions, in the Text, render'd *Schiſms* there. Thus St. *Paul* in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*: *I beſeech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you all ſpeak the ſame Thing, and that there be no Diviſions* (in the Margin *Schiſms*) *among you*; with may other of the ſame kind. So that it is manifeſt, that not we, but they are miſtaken in their Notion of *Schiſm*, and the Senſe they have put upon it is a meer Chimæra, which has not any Foundation either in Scripture or Language. 1 Cor. 1. 10.

BUT to give them all poſſible Indulgence, were it admitted that the proper, and Scripture Import of *Schiſm* ſignifies not Diviſion, but as they here ſtate it, a Breach of Charity; yet would their Friends reap very little Advantage thereby. For ſo little is the Regard they

have to *Charity*, as well as *Unity*, that (in ſpight of all their Boaſts to the contrary) if ever any People in the World were guilty of *Schiſm*, they are upon that Account. The ill Words, the Calumnies they daily, I may ſay, hourly caſt upon our holy, and beſt reform'd Church too, are what they are at preſent engag'd with, need not be told. If Lying and Slandering, Vilifying and Traducing, and all the other dire Effects of Rage and Diſcontent; if theſe are the Marks of *Charity*, Charity indeed abounds among them; otherwiſe the moſt florid Pretences that can poſſibly be made for them, are empty and vain, and give the Lye to the Experience of all that know them.

NOR can it in Nature and Reaſon be otherwiſe; for Unity and Love bear in their Nature that ſtrict Harmony, and are ſo cloſely link'd and cemented, that like *Hippocrates's Twins*, they live and die together. No ſooner is the fatal Cut of *Diviſion* given, but *Love* as well as *Unity* falls its Sacrifice; and as well might I ſtab a Man to the Heart, and expect to be regarded when I tell the World he did not die of the Stab I gave him, as to think the Chain between them can any way be broken, without the Diſſolution of both. Nor does Experience leſs confirm this Point; it has been the Complaint of all Ages, that whenever the *Band* of *Unity* has been broken, with it that of *Charity* has always burſt aſunder. So that whether we conſider the Etymology

of

of the Word, the Senſe it bears in Scripture, nay, the Novel, and before unheard of Senſe theſe Men themſelves have put upon it; the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing, or the general Suffrage and Experience of all that have gone before us; whether, I ſay, we conſider it under any, or all theſe Views, we ſhall certainly find our honeſt Proteſtant Diſſenters ſtill ſtand juſtly charg'd with the guilt of *Schiſm*, and therefore ought not be flatter'd and indulg'd, but ſeverely reprehended for it.

SO far we have dealt with the *Magi*, the grave and deliberate Betrayers of the Church they profeſs, nay, live and wax Fat upon: There are another Claſs of a merrier Strain, who place all their Logick in Laughter, and eſteem him the beſt Gentleman who can break a Jeſt on Almighty God, and giggle away the Diſtinctions of Good and Evil. Theſe indeed are not worth the Notice of any Sober and Rational Man; but becauſe the Weakneſs of ſome People may render them ſuſceptible of ill Impreſſions from even theſe ſilly ſoul'd Wretches, it may not be altogether uſeleſs to conſider ſome Things which are ſaid by them. They tell us then, that as for *Schiſm*, it is but a ſort of a Theological Scare-Crow, or kind of ſpiritual Bugbear, contriv'd by Prieſts to fright the unthinking Mobb; and that it is below that freedom of Thought, which is the peculiar Characteriſtic of a Gentleman, to have any Concern about it.

AND now, becauſe theſe witty Fellows are obſerv'd generally to underſtand more of a *Camp* than a *Church*: We ſhall endeavour to adapt what we have to ſay in this Matter, as well as we can, to their Military Genius. We cannot therefore but obſerve to them, that *Deſertion* is puniſh'd with *Death*; and which is yet the more Remarkable, ſo univerſal is the Practice, that it ſpeaks it both the Law of Nations and of Nature. This is a Crime eſteem'd by all deſtructive to the very Being of Society in general, and the tendereſt, the moſt compaſſionate General, will not, dare not paſs it by. Lenity in this Caſe were Cruelty, and he that ſhould diſpute the Juſtneſs of it, deſerves neither the Name of a Soldier, nor a Man. And is the Church the only Thing to be deſerted? Is Diviſion criminal and deſtructive of all Society but that? Do the amicable Laws of Chriſtianity more encourage Faction and Diviſion than all others? What will not thoſe Men ſay, that dare inſiſt on this!

I DOUBT not by this Time the honeſt Reader is tir'd with tracing the various Mæanders of theſe *Perverſe Gainſayers*; and did not the Degeneracy of the Age abundantly call for what has been done, I ſhould not have given either him, or my ſelf this Trouble; but that we may fix a juſt Idea on our Minds, of the Nature and heinous Malignity of the Sin of *Schiſm*, we ſhall lay before us what the

the holy Scriptures, and antient Fathers of the Church have deliver'd concerning it.

WOULD we draw our Notions in this Matter from the ſacred Oracles of God, we ſhould ſoon be convinc'd, that *Schiſm* is not ſuch a Trifle ſome make it; ſo earneſt, ſo repeated, ſo vehement are their Exhortations to *Love* and *Unity*, that the whole Divine Volume ſeems almoſt a continu'd Lecture thereon. How does the Royal Pſalmiſt exult on this Subject! *Behold!* (ſays he) *how good and joyful a Thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* He tells us, it *is like precious Oyntment, and the Dew of* Hermon, ſo grateful, ſo pleaſant, ſo beneficial! This was almoſt the laſt and dying Requeſt of our bleſſed Lord to his Father; *That we all might be one, as he and his Father are One.* This too was the continu'd Exhortation of his beloved Diſciple St. *John*, all whoſe Epiſtles breath little elſe but *Unity* and *Love*; and ſo exceedingly did the great Apoſtle St. *Paul* reſent the Breach of theſe in the *Schiſm* of the *Corinthians*, that he tells them they were *Carnal*, and with all the Vehemence of an ardent and pious Affection, *Beſeeches them, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to ceaſe their Diviſions.* No Art, no Rhetorick was thought too much to allure them from a Practice ſo very diſtructive to Chriſtianity in general. How often did he Conjure them, *by the Mercy of God, by the Love of Chriſt*, and by every Thing elſe he thought would move them

them in this Matter. What zealous Warnings does he give them againſt the vile Promoters of this Practice; *Mark* (ſays he) *thoſe that cauſe Diviſions, contrary to the Doctrine you have learn'd, and avoid them*; and Brands them as not *ſerving our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Bellies.* *Beware* (ſays he in another Place) *of Dogs, beware of the Conciſion*; no better Title would his Zeal allow them who rent and tore the Church of God aſunder. And in fine, ſo diametrically Oppoſite is Diviſion to the very Nature and Eſſence of God, *who is the God of Order, and not of Confuſion*; that the Royal Prophet delivers it as one of his peculiar Characteriſticks, that he promotes and maintains *Unity*, even in the moſt private and domeſtick Inſtances of Life; *he* (as he expreſſes it) *is the God that maketh Men to be of one Mind in an Houſe.*

IF we go to the Primitive Fathers, in this Point, their Senſe is ſtill the ſame: 'Where-'fore, ſays St. *Clement*, in his Epiſtle to the *Co-'rinthians*, are there Strifes, and Anger, and 'Diviſions, and Schiſms, and Wars among us? 'Have we not all one God, and one Chriſt? 'Is not one Spirit of Grace poured out upon 'us all? Have we not one Calling in Chriſt? 'Why then do we rend and tear in Pieces 'the Members of Chriſt, and raiſe Seditions 'againſt our own Body? Your *Schiſm*, (as he 'afterwards goes on) has perverted many, has 'diſcourag'd many: It has caus'd a Diffidence 'in many, and Grief in us all, and yet your 'Sedi-

Sedition continues ſtill. Take (as he proceeds) the Epiſtle of the bleſſed *Paul* the *Apoſtle* into your Hands: What was it that he wrote to you at the firſt preaching the Goſpel among them? Verily he did, *by the Spirit*, Admoniſh you concerning himſelf, and *Cephas*, and *Apollos*, becauſe that even then you had begun to fall into Parties, and Factions among your ſelves. Nevertheleſs, your Partiality led you into a much leſs Sin; foraſmuch as you placed your Affections upon Apoſtles, Men of eminent Reputation in the Church, and upon another, who was greatly try'd and approv'd of by them. But conſider, we pray you, who are they who have now led you aſtray, and leſſened the Reputation of that Brotherly Love, that was ſo eminent among you.

'Tis a Shame, my Beloved, yea, a very great Shame, and unworthy of your Chriſtian Profeſſion, to hear that the moſt firm and antient Church of the *Corinthians*, ſhould by one, or two Perſons be led into Sedition againſt their Prieſts. And this Report is come not only to us, but thoſe that differ from us. Inſomuch that the Name of the Lord is Blaſphemed thro' your Folly; and even ye your ſelves are brought in Danger by it.' No Arts of Language, nor the moſt

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* *S.* Clement's *Epiſt. to the* Corinthians, Sect. XX *and* XLVI. This Father is the ſame as is mention'd by St. *Paul*, *Phil.* iv. 3. *Vid.* his Life in the Genuine Epiſt. of the Fathers.

moſt piercing Eloquence, are thought too much by this Excellent Father, to fix on their Minds a juſt Horror of a Crime ſo dangerous to Chriſtianity. He calls all Nature to witneſs againſt the Enormity of it, and ſeems to make even things Inanimate proclaim the weighty Guilt. 'The Heavens '(ſays he) moving by God's appointment, 'are ſubject to him in Peace. Day and 'Night accompliſh the Courſes allotted them, 'not diſturbing one another. The Sun and 'Moon, and all the ſeveral Companies, and 'Conſtellations of the Stars, run the Courſe 'he has appointed them, in Concord, without the leaſt departing from them. The 'fruitful Earth yields its Food plentifully in 'due Seaſon, both to Man and Beaſt, and 'to all Animals that are upon it, according 'to his Will; not diſputing nor altering 'any thing, of what was ordered by him. 'So alſo the unfathomable and unſearcheable 'Floods of the Deep, are kept by his command; and the Conflux of the vaſt Sea, 'being brought together by his Order, into 'its ſeveral Collections, paſſes not the Bounds 'he has ſet to it, but as he appointed it, ſo 'it remains. For he ſaid, *hitherto ſhalt thou 'come, and thy Floods ſhall be broken with thee.* 'The Ocean unpaſſable to Mankind, and 'the Worlds that are beyond it, are go'vern'd by the ſame Commands of their 'Great Maſter. Spring and Summer, Au'tumn and Winter, give Place peaceably to 'each other. The ſeveral Quarters of the

'Winds

Winds fulfil their Works in their Seaſons, without offending one another. The ever flowing Fountains, made both for Pleaſure and Health, never fail to reach out their Breaſts to ſupport the Life of Man. Even the ſmalleſt Creatures live together in Peace and Concord with each other. All theſe has the great Creator and Lord of all commanded to obſerve Peace and Concord; being good to all; but eſpecially to us who flee to his Mercy through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, to whom be Glory and Majeſty for ever, and ever. *Amen.* Let us therefore (as he after concludes from the whole) conſider how near he is to us; and how that none of our Thoughts or Reaſonings, which we frame within our ſelves, are hid from him. It is therefore juſt that we ſhould not forſake our Rank, by doing contrary to his Will. Let us chooſe to offend a few fooliſh and inconſiderate Men, lifted up, and glorying in their own Pride, rather than God. Let us Reverence our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, whoſe Blood was given for us: Let us Honour thoſe who are ſet over us: Let us Reſpect the Aged that are amongſt us: Let us Inſtruct the younger Men, in the Diſcipline and Fear of the Lord.'

So far St. *Clement.*

* St. *Ignatius*, warning the *Trallians* againſt the Infection of *Hereſy*, earneſtly entreats them for the better avoiding of it, to be inſeparable from their Biſhop. 'He (ſays he) that 'is within the Altar, is pure: But he that 'is without that, that does any Thing with-'out the Biſhop, and Presbyters, and Dea-'cons, is not pure in his Conſcience.' And beſides, what we have before mentioned of this excellent Martyr's Senſe of this Matter, in his Epiſtle to the *Magneſians*, he charges them to be ſo very careful of avoiding the Sin of *Schiſm*, that he preſſes them to let *there be nothing that may be able to make a Diviſion among them.* And to this End, ſo entire is the Deference they are to pay to their Biſhop, '*That they are not to endeavour* '*to make any Thing appear ſo much as Rational,* '*without his Conſent and Advice.* He bids them 'come together in the ſame Place; have 'one common Prayer, one Supplication, *One* '*Mind, One Hope in Charity undefiled. There is* '(ſays he) *One Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, than whom 'nothing is better. Wherefore come ye al-'together, as unto One Temple of God, 'as to One Altar, as One *Jeſus Chriſt*, who 'proceeded from One Father, and Exiſts in 'One, and is return'd to One.' And again, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, † 'Let no 'Man (ſays he) deceive himſelf; if a Man 'be

* *Epiſtle to the* Trallians, *Sect.* VII. *That to the* Magneſians, VI, VII. † *Epiſtle to the* Epheſians, *Sect.* V.

be not within the Altar, he is deprived of the *Bread of God*: For if the *Prayer* of *one* or *two* be of ſuch Force, as we are told, how much more powerful ſhall that of the *Biſhop* and the whole Church be? He therefore that does not come together into the ſame Place with it, is proud, and has already condemn'd himſelf; for it is written, *God reſiſteth the Proud.* Let us take heed therefore that we do not ſet our ſelves againſt the Biſhop, that we may be ſubject to God.

IF we paſs ſome Centuries after theſe Apoſtolical Fathers, we ſhall find the Experience the Church had of the Nature of *Schiſm*, did not at all leſſen the Senſe the Fathers then had of its Enormity. There ſeem no Epithets too black to give it a juſt Hue. They call it *Impious*, the *greateſt Impiety*, *Sacriledge*, the *worſt of Sacriledge*, *Diabolical*, and every Thing elſe that can convey an Image of Horror in the Mind. *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* tells the Author of the *Novatian Schiſm*, *That he had better have ſuffered any Thing than thus to have made a Rent in the Church; and that it was as glorious a Martyrdom to die to prevent a Schiſm, as to avoid Idolatry*; and he inſiſts on it *as a much greater Thing; the one* (as he argues) *being a Martyrdom for the Church, the other only for ones own Soul.* * *St.* Cyprian *charges them with Pride and Arrogance, and do-*

* Cyprian de Unit. Eccl. *N.* 11, 12. Aug. Epiſt. 43, 51.

ing unſpeakable Miſchief to the Church. St. Auguſtin mentions *Schiſm as the greateſt of all Wickedneſs, even worſe than Idolatry*: God (ſays he) *puniſh'd it more ſeverely than Idolatry, ſince they who were guilty of Idolatry, were to be deſtroy'd by the Sword; but Schiſmaticks were ſwallow'd up of the Earth.*

ENDLESS were it to recite what has paſs'd from all the Fathers of any Note, againſt the ſeveral Schiſmaticks of their Times; and but that the Beauty of their Language, as well as Cogency of their Reaſon, naturally create a Fondneſs of theſe ſort of Quotations, I had not ſo largely laid them before you. But that we may, if poſſible, leave this Matter yet farther out of all Doubt, I cannot but preſent to your View the Senſe of one Man in this Point, who, tho' with reſpect to diſtance of Time, he cannot claim much Deference; yet, I am perſuaded, with ſome will be of more Weight than all that has been offer'd, I mean the *Father* of the *Presbyterians*, * Mr. *Richard Baxter*, who has given us ſuch an Account of the horrid Guilt of *Schiſm*, as one would think were ſufficient to deter all that admired him from the Practice. 'Schiſm (ſays he) is a Sin againſt ſo many, and clear and vehement Words of the Holy Ghoſt, that it is utterly without Excuſe; Whoredoms and Treaſon, and Perjury, are not oftner forbidden in the Goſpel than this. It is

* *Chriſtian Directory*, p. 741.

is contrary to the very Design of *Christ* in our Redemption, which was *to reconcile us all to God*, and to unite and center us all in him. It is contrary to the Design of the Spirit of Grace, and to the very Nature of Christianity. It is a Sin against the neareſt Bonds of our higheſt Relations to each other. It is either a dividing *Christ*, or robbing him of a great Part of his Inheritance; and neither of theſe is a little Sin: It is accompany'd with Self-Ignorance, and Pride, and great Unthankfulneſs to God. Church-Dividers are the moſt ſucceſsful Servants of the Devil, being Enemies to Chriſt in his Family and Livery, and ſerve the Devil more effectually than open Enemies. *Schiſm* is a Sin that contradicts all God's Ordinances, and means of Grace, which are purpoſely to procure and maintain the Unity of the Church. It is a Sin againſt as great and lamentable Experiences, as almoſt any Sin can be; and this is a heinous Aggravation of it, that it is commonly father'd upon God. Laſtly, It is moſt unlike the heavenly State, and in ſome regard worſe than the Kingdom of the Devil, for he *would not deſtroy it by dividing it againſt it ſelf.* Remember now that *Schiſm*, and making Parties and Diviſions in the Church, is not ſo ſmall a Sin as many take it for.

AND now, after the *Sacred Oracles of God*; after the *venerable Doctors* of the *Pure* and *Primitive*

mitive Church; nay, after the very Pen of one of *Schiſm*'s moſt noted *Ring-leaders* himſelf has thus joyn'd with them, in giving up his full and peremptory Sentence againſt the Sin of *Schiſm*, it will not ſurely ſtill be deem'd a Trifle. Let me therefore diſmiſs this Point with the Advice of the fore-mention'd St. *Clement*: * 'Who (ſays he) is there among 'you that is Generous? Who that is Com-'paſſionate? Who that has any Charity? 'Let him ſay, if this Sedition, this Conten-'tion, theſe Schiſms be upon my Account, 'I am ready to depart, and to go away 'whitherſoever ye pleaſe, and do whatſoever 'you command me; only let the Flock of 'Chriſt be at Peace, with the Elders that 'are ſet over it. He that ſhall do this, ſhall 'get himſelf a very great Honour in the 'Lord; and there is no Place but what will 'be ready to receive him: *For the Earth is 'the Lord's, and the Fulneſs thereof.* Theſe 'Things they who have their Converſation 'towards God not to be repented of both 'have done, and will always be ready to 'do.

THUS far we have conſider'd our honeſt Proteſtant Diſſenters Difference with the Church of *England*, as they ſtand diſtinguiſh'd by the well known, too well known Names of *Quakers*, *Anabaptiſts*, and *Presbyterians*. There yet remains, as I conceive, one remarkable Dif-

* *St.* Clement's *Epiſtle to the* Corinthians, *Sect.* LIV.

ifference more, which is common to them , and that is, that not one of these Sets People, consider'd as a Body, have any here declar'd what their common Faith is the Affirmative. I would not willingly be istaken in what is here asserted; my mean- g is, That neither the People called *Qua- rs*, *Anabaptists*, nor *Presbyterians*, have any Sett Principles, Positions, or Articles of Faith, which any of them have given their com- non and publick Suffrage and Consent, in he Affirmative.

THIS perhaps may seem something strange to them, who have read *George Whitehead's Creed of the Quakers*; *the Faith and Practice of the Congregational Churches of* England; (to which the *Anabaptists* may be mostly reduc'd) *and the Assemblies Confession of Faith.*

BUT these Difficulties will instantly va- nish, if it be observ'd, that tho' it be allow'd there have been such Papers printed, as *George Whitehead's Faith* of the People called *Qua- kers*; yet it no where appears, that the *Qua- kers* in a Body, or representatively by their Teachers, have given any publick Testimo- ny, that what is there wrote, is the common Faith of them all; and 'till this be done, we have all the Reason in the World to con- clude, that there neither is, nor ever was such a Thing among the People called *Qua- kers*, as a common Confession of *Faith.*

THIS

THIS, we muſt confeſs, cannot altogether ſo fully be ſaid of the two latter Inſtances; the Books referr'd to, having the publick Suffrage of the ſeveral Teachers of thoſe Times. But then we can't but obſerve, they have not the ſame Suffrage or Conſent given to them, by thoſe Teachers which denominate themſelves the ſame as they were now; that is, the preſent *Anabaptiſt*, or *Independent Teachers* do not Subſcribe to theſe Poſitions, or Articles of Faith, as thoſe their Predeceſſors did; neither do the *Presbyterian Teachers* now Subſcribe to what their Predeceſſors (at leaſt in Name) call'd the *Aſſemblies Confeſſion of Faith*; and therefore we are as much at a Loſs to know what the *Faith* of either of theſe Sets of Diſſenters now is, as if thoſe Books were never wrote. If their *Faith* is the ſame now as then, why do they ceaſe publickly avowing it by Subſcription? If their Minds are alter'd in ſome Points, why don't they publiſh thoſe Alterations, and ſo, like the Glorious St. *Auguſtine*, make themſelves valu'd for their Recantations? Or if, as ſome of them pretend, they agree with *Thirty Six of our Thirty Nine Articles*, why have they not given ſome Way or other a publick and common Conſent to them? But thus to be content with a bare Negative Creed, and to let the World only know what they perverſely Deny and Diſpute, will tempt an honeſt and impartial Man to think, that either they are

aſham'd

ham'd, as a Body, to own their *Faith*, or se are so perplex'd in the Matter, that they now not what they Believe themselves.

SOME may think this easily clear'd by ledging, that no Man is admitted a Teach-, either upon the Congregational, or *Pres-terian* Model, but he who makes a publick Confession of his *Faith*, before some Elders, nd the Congregation; and so may show us Mr. *Bradbury*'s, Mr. *Rosewel*'s, and abundance f other incomparable Pieces of that kind. n Print.

BUT after all, this can never amount to uch a Thing as a common Consent in *Faith*; and the utmost that can be inferr'd from t is, that this is Mr. *Bradbury*'s, and this Mr. *Rosewel*'s Faith, and for any Rule they ave to the Contrary, they too as different s their Faces: But were there a Harmony etween them, must the *Faith* of the Church e resolv'd into a private Spirit? And what s there that can be call'd a private Spirit, f such Compositions may not bear that Name? The Apostle speaks of *a Form of ound Words*, and undoubtedly such best suit vith sound Doctrines; and cannot these Peo-le find any to which they can give a com-non Consent? Will not the *Apostles Creed* t self pass with them, or dare they pretend o mend it? *Are Assent, Consent, and Subscrip-ion* such frightful Things, that they cannot give them to the Word of God himself? *Oh thou*

who art the God of Order, not Confuſion, reſtify this vile Perverſneſs in the Minds of Men!

BUT, bleſſed be God, it is not ſo with the Church of *England*; She and theſe unhappy People are remarkably oppoſite in this, in every Circumſtance. Her Faith, as ſhe need not be aſham'd, neither is ſhe afraid to own it to all the World. Her *Martyrs* have confeſs'd it in Flames; nor Flattery, nor Terror, could make them e'er deny it. She knows no *Clergy* that will not heartily Conſent to her *ſound Words*, as well as *Doctrines*. No private Spirit, no not that of the moſt Judicious, and Learned of her Sons, by her is made Authentic. Would you know the Faith of the Church of *England*? 'tis in her Articles. Her *Apoſtates* may Comment upon, but, thanks be to God, they cannot alter them. They may *privily bring in damnable Hereſies*, but they cannot call them Tenets of the Church of *England*. No! bleſſed be God, they ſtill ſtand as her glorious *Martyrs* compos'd them, the Joy of her Friends, and the Confuſion of both her publick and private Enemies.

NOR will they find more Encouragement from the *Reformed Churches Abroad*; (however they may imagine themſelves agreeable to ſome of their Models) for were both the *Lutheran* and *Calviniſtical Churches* to be thoroughly examin'd, it will be certainly found they have all of them thought it their Duty to

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Confeſs Chriſt before Men, by a publick and common Declaration of their Faith. So that upon the leaſt Enquiry, it will appear that our preſent *Engliſh* Diſſenters, are the only People in the World, profeſſing even Chriſtianity in general, who are guilty of this unwarrantable Silence with reſpect to the publick and common Conſent of their Faith.

AND now at laſt, where are thoſe *Trifles*, thoſe *inconſiderable Differences*, ſo much, ſo often, ſo noiſily talk'd of? Is it a *Trifle* whether we Believe the Scripture to be the *Word of God*, and the *Lord Jeſus* it reveals to us, ever to have had any Being? Is it a *Trifle* whether our *Children* have any ſuch Thing as a Fœderal Right to *Salvation*? Is it a *Trifle* whether we have any ſuch Thing among us as a *Miniſtry*, a *Church*, *the Word* and *Sacraments*, or a *Common Faith*? What is Important, if theſe are *Trifles*? And what is more evident than that theſe are the Matters in Controverſy between us, and the *honeſt Proteſtant Diſſenters*?

IT is a ſtrange, it is a melancholy Scene, to ſee what Art, what Addreſs, what Language is us'd to deceive us in this Matter, by Men profeſſing themſelves Members of the Church of *England*, and, if you will believe them, true, ſteady, zealous Members too. That all theſe deſignedly betray, and give up the Intereſt of the Church they pretend to, I dare not preſume to ſay; but that

they effectually do it, is what our *Holy Mother* too long fatally hath experienc'd. Some may be, I believe are, cheated with Words; think that theſe Conceſſions may gain upon *Diſſenters*; and that when they ſeem to yield, that their Principles are better than they really are, they will be the more readily enclin'd to hear what can be offer'd againſt them; but we have been too long deluded with this Pretence. A perverſe and wilful People are not to be reclaim'd by flattering them in their Errors; and, whatever ſome may think of it, in Points of that Conſequence, as thoſe in which we differ, 'tis a ſtrange ſort of Charity to do it. *The Blood that is required at their Hands*, by God himſelf, for thoſe whom their unwarrantable Silence, whether it conſiſts in *Admoniſhment*, *Reproof*, or *Rebuke*, has ſuffer'd to periſh will, ſadly convince, I fear, too many, that the Doctrines of Chriſtiaty are not to be trifled with. Silence, yea, Softneſs, Eaſineſs, in this Caſe, is criminal; and it muſt be inſiſted on, that our bleſſed Lord exercis'd as eminently the Grace of Charity in calling the *Scribes* and *Phariſees a Generation of Vipers*, as in the ſeeming milder Inſtances of his Mercy and Compaſſion. External Force and Violence, the Arms of Reſiſtance and Rebellion, the Edge of the carnal Sword, theſe indeed are very unwarrantable Weapons to be us'd upon any Pretence of this Nature: But an honeſt Zeal for Religion, *the Armour of God*, *the Sword of the Spirit*, we may, we ought to uſe againſt ſuch People.

e. Let us therefore boldly, earneſtly, zea-ſly *Contend* with theſe Weapons *for the ith.* The Force of Reaſon, the Power of rgument, and the Edge of Rebuke, will turally raiſe us abundance of Enemies in is our *Spiritual Warfare*; but let not this iſcourage us, let us conſider, though it is *Fight*, and it's like the Grapple may be ery hard; yet it is *the good Fight of Faith*, and *exceeding and Eternal Weight of Glory* ſhall be he Victor's Wreath: Let us therefore *be ſted-aſt, immoveable, always abounding in the Work f the Lord*; be neither intimidated not flat-er'd from this Duty by the greateſt, the moſt mighty Infidel on Earth: *Foraſmuch as we know that our Labour will not be in Vain, and in due Time we ſhall Reap, if we faint not.*

THERE is one Gentleman has ſo very handſomely ſtated his Meaning in this Controverſy, that tho', in the main Senſe, what is delivered by him, has already been conſider'd, yet ſuch is the Deference I think my ſelf obliged to pay to any one who ſeems to argue fairly, that I hope the Reader will excuſe the Repetition, if I lay what he has ſaid before him: * 'Moderation '(then ſays he) is not a ſlighting, and gi-'ving up any Thing that is truly Juſt and 'Valuable: It does not ſuppoſe, that we are

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* *Mr.* John Hoadly's *Sermon at the Aſſizes at* Salisbury, 1707. p. 5.

'to abate of that true and honeſt Zeal and
'Courage, that is to be employ'd in any
'Thing that is in its own Nature Good
'and Neceſſary; no, but it teaches us to
'diſtinguiſh theſe Things from thoſe that are
'Circumſtantially ſo, and to eſteem them ſo
'much more, and to maintain and embrace
'them ſo much more earneſtly as they are
'better. A Man is not to be moderately
'Honeſt, or moderately Virtuous; theſe are
'thin and weak Scandals. Virtue and Ho-
'neſty are within the Line that Moderation
'walks in, nor is the Queſtion about them.
'The Queſtion is, whether a Man may not
'ſtoop from ſomewhat he may think his own
'Right? Whether he may not be Gentle
'and Compaſſionate? Whether he may not,
'in Things that are not ſo good as Peace,
'ſeek Peace by giving them up? And the
'Anſwer is, No; a Man can't give up Ju-
'ſtice and Honeſty; whoever thought ſo,
''tis a willing Miſtake.

SO entirely am I ſatisfy'd with this good-natur'd Gentleman, as a Caſuiſt, in the Account he has given of Moderation, that I wholly agree to, and read him with pleaſure. Moderation, thus limited, is, as he well expreſſes it, what Reaſon, good Senſe, good Nature and Scripture recommend; but then, where muſt be the Application? Where are the People whoſe Diſpute with us is about Things of no juſt Value, or only in Matters of our private Right? Theſe are Things, we own,

we

e might recede from; 'tis true Moderation, s Chriſtianity to do it; but *Atheiſts, Deiſts, ree-Thinkers, Quakers, Anabaptiſts, Presbyterians,* o, nor *moderate Men* neither, do not quarrel ith us about theſe Things. Nothing leſs than ur Creed, at leaſt ſome of the weighty and omentous Articles of it, will ſatisfy any of heſe People; and in this I am ſo far from be- ng willingly, that I ſhould rejoice to find my elf at all Miſtaken. This Gentleman himſelf, notwithſtanding his florid Pretences of attend- ng to Things according to their true and juſt Value, is not without his Differences with us, in Points of no inconſiderable Conſequence; which, with thoſe of ſome of his other Bre- thren of Moderation, will be the Buſineſs of the Second Propoſition, laid down in this Un- dertaking, to examine, namely, to conſider this Controverſy, *as it has more immediately outrag'd ſome of the Prime and Fundamental Articles of our Faith.*

The End of the Firſt Part.

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